COLLABORATING TO STRNGTHEN YOUR AGRITOURISM ENTERPRISE

Producers diversify by developing agritourism operations for a variety of reasons, ranging from a need to improve their profitability, a desire to create new jobs, and passion for educating visitors about agriculture, the environment and their cultural heritages. Collaboration with other agritourism operations, local businesses and government agencies can be critical to achieving these objectives. Regional agricultural marketing organizations are being formed throughout the Western United States to facilitate such collaboration.

ENGAGING IN COLLABORATIVE MARKETING OF YOUR AGRITOURISM ENTERPRISE

SEARCH for organizations engaged in agricultural marketing, promotions and events in your region.

REVIEW their websites to understand their goals and activities. See Resources at the end of this document.

ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE in your local organization, if one exists. You will benefit from the shared promotion activities, increased awareness of agritourism in the region, referrals from other agritourism enterprises and local businesses, and mutual support.

- Collaboration in marketing is important, particularly in areas distant from urban centers. You can leverage your limited resources by collaborating in regional marketing efforts.
  - California’s Sierra Oro Farm Trails sold 3,000 tickets to its 2018 Passport Weekend. Its trail map generated exposure for 35 agritourism enterprises, attracting visitors who wanted a well-rounded experience.
  - In Colorado, Pedal the Plains is an initiative of the Denver Post and State of Colorado to highlight the frontier heritage to outdoor enthusiasts, featuring a different set of communities each year.
- A cluster of sites creates a larger draw for tourists looking for destinations with multiple recreation, lodging and education opportunities.
- By networking with other agritourism operations in your region, you will gain referrals and insights about operating and marketing your enterprise.
- The organization will also connect you with other local businesses, potentially leading to sales of your products to local food and beverage manufacturers, restaurants, lodging and retailers.
FORMING A REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL MARKETING ORGANIZATION WHEN THERE IS NONE

SEARCH for organizations engaged in agricultural marketing in neighboring regions.

REVIEW their websites to understand their goals, governance structure and activities. See Resources at the end of this document.

UNDERSTAND the benefits generated by regional agricultural marketing organizations for agritourism enterprises and the community.

DISCUSS the need for establishing such an organization with other Chambers of Commerce, tourism or agritourism enterprises in your region.

DEVELOP a regional agricultural marketing organization.

- Select steering committee.
- Identify potential objectives, governance structure, membership requirements and activities.
- Prepare financial projections and business plan.
- Hold meeting of potential members to report findings.
- File documents creating the association.
- Hold the organization’s first annual meeting, elect board members and adopt by-laws.
- Start operations and begin promotion activities!

SEEKING SUPPORT FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT

REVIEW MATERIALS from your state’s tourism agency regarding the impacts of tourism.

ENSURE that local agency staff and elected officials understand that an agritourism cluster creates a larger draw for tourists looking for destinations with multiple sites to visit.

EDUCATE government agencies and elected officials, particularly in rural areas, to understand that agritourism fosters economic development in the region. You may also need to help them recognize that zoning restrictions, permitting requirements and other regulatory efforts can inhibit agritourism and may need to be revisited.

ADVOCATE to city and county agencies to reallocate funding to build capacity in the community in various ways, such as:

- Offer hospitality training to improve skills among local staff. Develop more visitor lodging.
- Provide road and signage improvements to facilitate visitors’ travel.
- Example: Colorado now has a Colorado Rural Academy for Tourism (CRAFT) to offer training and support for rural economic development through creation and branding of new or enhanced traveler experiences.
- CRAFT provides support and education for rural communities on how to build tourism into an economic development strategy.
SEEK support from local government officials and hospitality associations to create an assessment district to fund tourism promotion activities.

- Example: California’s Butte County recently approved a Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) that assesses businesses that provide transient lodging. As part of the TBID’s strategy to “stay just one more night”, the county’s agritourism operations are being prominently promoted through the TBID’s website at no direct cost to them.

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**RESOURCES FOR COLLABORATION**

**Collaborative Marketing**

1. [State Supported Agritourism Organizations](#)
2. [Marketing Regional Farms and Wineries: A Guide for California Agricultural Marketing Groups](#)

**Forming a Regional Agricultural Marketing Organization When There is None**

1. [Organizing a Statewide Agritourism Association](#)
2. See Resources section in [Marketing Regional Farms and Wineries: A Guide for California Agricultural Marketing Groups](#)

**Support from Government Agencies**

1. [Changing the Rules: Planning For and Regulating Agritourism in California](#)
2. [Butte County Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan](#)
3. [Butte County Tourism Development Improvement District: Management District Plan](#)
4. [Zoning and Land Use for Agritourism](#)